
From: Veronica Rogers Everett [mailto:tahoe20@gmail.com]

Sent: Sunday, March 03, 2013 9:13 PM

To: Selectboard; Musante, John; Planning Department Email; Conservation Department Email

Subject: Landmark Properties

Hello members of the Select Board, the Planning Board, the Conservation Board, and Mr. Musante,

This will undoubtedly be one of many emails you will be receiving about the proposed development in North Amherst that is being adamantly opposed by the High Point neighborhood and the Cushman neighborhood. We will be attending various town meetings in the coming weeks to voice our opposition and also to let you know about the efforts of our neighborhoods to bring a successful defeat of this proposition. We are already well organized and a formidable group, despite some quotes in the Gazette saying that the development would be "away" from established neighborhoods. We are an established neighborhood and one that sees absolutely no benefit to our quality of life by allowing this development to occur.

Part of our initial research has been into the other developments that Landmark has completed or has been denied. We were fascinated and encouraged by the efforts at VTech and UNC Chapel Hill to deny Landmark the opportunity to create their "retreats".

Virginia Tech article: <http://blogs.roanoke.com/theburgs/news/2012/05/13/opposition-forms-to-blacksburg-housing-proposal/>

We were specifically struck by this article in a local Chapel Hill newsblog about the opposition to the plan and how much it sounds like our opposition.

Here is the link: <http://chapelboro.com/Council-Pans-Student-Housing-Plan-For-Homestead-Ro/12592374>

Additionally there is this newsblog article:

<http://blogs.newsobserver.com/orangechat/chapel-hill-town-council-skeptical-on-retreat-proposal>

While I have no authority or experience with UMass' ability to house its students, I'm curious why things like student towers/apartment buildings can't be built on campus. The footprint would be smaller and the vertical opportunity exists. UMass already has some tall towers on campus including its library and student center--why not consider apartment buildings like other 'urban' universities have (BU, Northeastern). While Amherst isn't urban--the UMass campus is as close to an urban center we have. Why not follow the lead of other major cities with their attempt to create "work live walk" communities and keep UMass students on campus where they can walk to classes etc? Do you really think students are interested in being part of UMass sprawl?

As the newsblog out of UNC above states above:

"We need to create dense student development downtown," he said.

The Retreat does not fit with Chapel Hill's vision for a sustainable, public-transit and biking oriented community, said Council member Penny Rich.

"It seems to me like we're building parking lot and you get a room with your parking space and it should be the other way around," she said. "Because this is so far away, how do you walk over to Harris Teeter from there?

You can't. This is just not what I want to see in that area."

Read more here: <http://blogs.newsobserver.com/orangechat/chapel-hill-town-council-skeptical-on-retreat-proposal#storylink=cpy>

Lastly--our neighborhood wholly rejects the idea that this high density use of over 150 beautiful acres would somehow be well managed by a building development company that really has no stake in the success of the project beyond its initial stages of creating 'cottages' that are pleasing to the eye and have lots of bells and whistles (that frankly seem in direct contrast to the mostly untouched nature of this upper North Amherst area) but will likely fall into disrepair over time due to the transient nature of students. This development would be far away from UMass for these students and would create more traffic and other problems. As many of us have probably mentioned in emails the past few days, all of us moved to the Atkins reservoir/Flat Hills/Market Hill area precisely to live in peace and quiet. Even those of us who work at UMass and work with students (including me), it was still a conscious choice to live in the far reaches of Amherst to enjoy the peaceful and rural nature of this upper north east area of town.

You will be hearing more from us in person and in letters-thanks for your attention to this email.

Veronica Everett
Overlook Dr.
Amherst

From: Ann Cooper-Ciccarelli [mailto:ascocooper@yahoo.com]

Sent: Saturday, March 02, 2013 5:55 PM

To: Planning Department Email

Subject: UMass Housing Development- Cushman Woods

Mr. Tucker,

I am writing to you to express my deepest concern over this proposed housing project. I am a resident with land that abuts the Cowls property in question. Although the area referenced is quoted in the Gazette to be not in any particular neighborhood, Tony Maroulis is dead wrong. It may not be in the middle of *his* neighborhood, but it is smack in the middle of mine. I am vehemently opposed to this student housing project. This is a quiet neighborhood, surrounded by woods. We chose to move to this area over 6 years ago to avoid the center of town, and the University. We have chosen to raise our 6 year old and 3 year old here. Where we live, we are not near the the loud parties. Clearing out beautiful wooded areas, and walking trails for loud, drunk and irresponsible college kids is a horrible idea.

I am an emergency physician at Cooley Dickinson hospital. I know all too well what happens on the weekends. We see between 10 and 30 intoxicated Students every weekend night. While I am happy to take care of them at work, I do not want parties going on anywhere near my home.

We will not allow a "Club Med" for students in my backyard. This quiet area will not support the thoroughfare of construction, and student traffic for movie going, fitness center use and parties. To say that Landmark will be respectful of the community and nature is a lie. Landmark Properties plans to build this awful housing monstrosity in the middle of our serene wilderness, and once done, will never look back at the destruction of wildlife. This wilderness is the main reason that many of our residents and neighbors chose to settle exactly here.

Mr Doornbos (VP of Landmark Prop.) is quoted in our local paper as saying "this will be low density, cottage style housing". There is nothing low density about 170 units 2-4 bedrooms each. This is an average of 500 students. Would you like 500 college kids in your neighborhood?

We, as a community, and neighborhood will band together to fight this. Please show your commitment to the local residents of this town and oppose the plans for this development.

Dr. Ann Cooper-Ciccarelli
109 High Point Drive
Amherst, MA

From: Peggy Chien [<mailto:pegchien@hotmail.com>]

Sent: Wednesday, March 06, 2013 9:28 PM

To: Conservation Department Email; Planning Department Email; tony@amherstarea.com

Subject: Opposition- Cushman student housing development

Dear Mr. Ziomek, Mr. Tucker and Mr. Maroulis,

Please read the letter I sent to Mr. Musante and consider it in your decisions to move forward with this plan.

Thank you,

Peggy

Dear Mr. Musante,

I was very disappointed to read the front page article in Friday's Amherst Bulletin about a planned student housing development in the Cushman section of town. I have lived in North Amherst for 4 years now and particularly enjoy the fact that many families reside here. Add these plans to the ever increasing poorly regulated single home student rental properties in town and it will continue to negatively change the landscape of Amherst. It appears that catering to the demands of UMASS and their student population is more important than preserving Amherst as a the quaint lovely town I knew and loved just 4 short years ago. If a family interested in moving to the valley asked me today about buying a home in Amherst, I would discourage it.

Please show your commitment to the local residents of this town and oppose the plans for this development.

Sincerely,

Peggy Chien
4 Teawaddle Lane
Amherst, MA

From: Deborah Thornton [dthornton8184@yahoo.com]
Sent: Wednesday, March 06, 2013 5:53 AM
To: Info Email
Subject: Speed Indicator

To Town Manager Laurence Shaffer,

I am the resident of 92 Henry St.

I, along with all the residents of Henry St. are concerned about the
excessive traffic and speed of traffic on Henry St.

This is a particular concern during the morning commute hours and the evening "rush hours".

This is a significant concern for the Cushman School, since the morning and evening "rush hours"
correspond

with child drop off and pick up times.

I would like to request the use of a speed indicator to better gauge this Public Safety Issue.

I can be reached at dthornton8184@yahoo.com
413-461-5900

Sincerely,

Deborah Thornton

From: Jen Dolan [<mailto:jhdolan3@gmail.com>]
Sent: Friday, March 08, 2013 1:26 PM
To: Planning Department Email
Subject: UMass housing in North Amherst

Dear Jonathan,

I am writing to you regarding my concern about the student housing that is proposed for North Amherst. As a resident of High Point I worry about a number of things including:

- Loss of recreation space
- More Amherst high school students attending college parties (drinking, driving, drugs, physical encounters both wanted and unwanted)
- Decreased access to emergency vehicles (ie I better not need an ambulance between Thurs afternoon and Sun night)
- Wear and tear on the roads
- NOISE
- Decreased property values

One only has to look at any week-end edition of the Gazette to see the impact students have on the community.

Perhaps you don't live near this proposed development.
I would ask that you imagine you did live close by the proposed development,
How would you feel about it? Would you support it?

UMass does not have to keep getting bigger. Academically they are not serving the ones they have as well as they could be.

UMass wants more students because that means more money.

Why should the town of Amherst have to pay such a high price for their financial gain - I don't see the equity.

I hope you and your colleagues will not support student housing in the North Amherst area.

Sincerely,

Jen Dolan
115 High point Dr

From: Constance Gildea [<mailto:cwgildea@gmail.com>] **On Behalf Of** Constance Gildea
Sent: Friday, March 15, 2013 12:22 PM
To: Planning Department Email
Subject: NO, NO, NO, Cinda Jones and the planned RETREAT for students in North Amherst!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Begin forwarded message:

From: Constance Gildea <cwgildea@cwgildea.com>
Subject: Re: Emily Coleman replied to Ann's post re: Meeting with Cinda Jones
Date: March 15, 2013 12:15:49 PM EDT
To: Nextdoor High Point <reply+NTc2MTQzX3Byb2RfUE9TVF85OTYzNjE=@nextdoor.com>

Hi Emily, Dennis and I would definitely want to be involved in this fight to stop this student development. What on Earth is Cinda Jones thinking???? After last weekend's loud, drunken craziness in N Amherst on Meadow St, she wants to expand to a second location of loud craziness here? The loss of the beautiful woods? I always felt this was the nicest most beautiful part of Amherst. It would be devastating to see it ruined by greed. It is why we moved here. We spent many years living in State College, PA among students and we know exactly what occurs and how horrible it is to endure loud parties, music into the late night and the mayhem that ensues. Sign us up for Yahoo and listserv (although I have to admit I don't know exactly what that is). We are in and willing to help and contribute any way we can to stop this!

Best, Constance

iOs . n Mar 15, 2013, at 9:01 AM, Nextdoor High Point wrote:

Emily Coleman from High Point said:

Hi Constance -- we have put a group of neighbors together to fight this proposed land development. We have a Yahoo group and listserv that we are using to communicate with each other and so that everyone can keep everyone else up to date on what has been done. We can send you an invite to that group so that you can see our progress and get involved in any way you'd like. Thanks! Emily

Original post by Ann Ciccarelli from High Point (10 replies):

I received a call today from Cinda Jones. She was forwarded an email I sent to Jason Doornbos expressing my disapproval of this project. She has offered to meet with me regarding her plans. I would ...

 Shared with High Point only

[View or reply](#) · [Thank](#) · [Private message](#)
You can also reply by email.

June 17, 2013
110 Bridge St.
Amherst, MA 01002

To The Select Board:

We are asking the Town of Amherst to exercise all due diligence in educating its boards and commissions concerning the Town's opportunity to purchase 154 acres between Henry St., Market Hill Rd., and Flat Hills Rd. We have served on the Town of Amherst Finance Committee and Board of Health. One of us has 25 years experience as a professional in municipal finance and we are aware of the multiple legal and financial issues involved.

At this moment the Town is unexpectedly a potential buyer of property shown with a green star on the Conceptual Land Use Map shown to citizen groups while they developed the Master Plan in 2007. (The map is currently available in the map gallery of the Master Plan.) That green star designated this property a "Potential Priority Area for Conservation". The property abuts or is nearby:

- municipal water treatment facilities
- historic district
- Cushman Brook Wildlife Corridor where the Town is still carefully acquiring land

Another buyer stated, in its letter to abutters that the use proposed for this land was "student houses" under its Retreat brand. Our Master Plan Strategies H.7.a and H.7.b call for special zoning or zoning overlay districts and the creation of design standards as a preparation for creating taxable student housing. Our personal belief is that privately owned, high-density purpose built student housing (700 unrelated adults) is a poor match for any land such as these 154 acres zoned Rural Outlying.

Few could predict that the Town would have this opportunity to be a buyer. Of course, the Town is not fully prepared at this moment to establish what the "fair market value" which it would need to offer as a buyer is. We believe that investing Town funds in an objective analysis of "fair market value" is an essential step the Town must take before any thoughtful decision can be made on exercising the Town's right of first refusal. Although media coverage places the value at \$6.5 million, we and other citizens believe that the value is unknown at this time and is likely to be much less.

Maps generated by consultants for the Master Plan show this land with multiple "Natural Absolute Constraints" (to development). These acres are interlaced with perennial and intermittent streams. They have thin soils and extensive bedrock. Other environmental challenges are possible. The determination that a buyer can make a commercial profit on an initial investment of \$6.5 million by charging young, unrelated adults higher than average rents for amenities such as a 24/7 club house associated with 700 leases on 700 bedrooms is a long distance in the future.

A thoughtful, well-informed consideration of this purchase opportunity for the Town is the type of due diligence needed at this point. We look forward to learning more about the objective value of these 154 acres of Rural Outlying land.

Sincerely,

Christopher Pile
Municipal Finance Director, retired

Ellen Leahy-Pile

Editorial: Amherst cannot escape need for more rental housing

By

Wednesday, March 6, 2013

(Published in print: Thursday, March 7, 2013)

One of the most pressing issues facing Amherst is the need for more off-campus student housing, along with better management and control over what now exists. As the University of Massachusetts expands, the likelihood is great that more older homes in neighborhoods close to campus will be converted to student apartments.

As we've seen, that can make for a fractious mix. The town has a Safe and Healthy Neighbors Initiative under way and discussion continues on a rental permit system to hold landlords accountable.

These efforts may mitigate conflicts in existing neighborhoods, but more housing units are needed. The question is where.

Proposals for new student housing complexes have not fared well in Amherst in the last decade. And a plan that just surfaced has quickly run into the same opposition that sunk previous proposals.

Landmark Properties of Athens, Ga., has an agreement to buy 154 wooded acres off Henry Street in the town's Cushman neighborhood from W.D. Cowls Inc. The company would build a 170-unit development with cottage-style homes with a mix of two, three and four bedrooms. Units would be clustered to maintain open space, which would also create a buffer from the rest of the neighborhood.

Landmark would have on-site management. It has built similar projects in other college communities.

The proposal garnered early support from Tony Maroulis, executive director of the Amherst Area Chamber of Commerce: "The benefit I see is there is a need for high-quality student housing that is itself separate from local neighborhoods," Maroulis said. The Retreat, as it is called by the developers, would expand the town's stock of student housing without increasing the number of rentals in existing neighborhoods.

Neighbors in Cushman worry that their quiet, wooded neighborhood will be turned into party central when 500 or more students take up residence there. The development will mean more cars and a loss of woodlands that now provides a place for outdoor recreation.

In letters to the Gazette, some neighbors have already challenged whether the project meets the letter and spirit of the town's master plan, which supports denser development in town centers while preserving open space in outlying areas.

The Planning Board will need to see all the details to determine what the review and permitting process will be.

In 2004 a Texas firm, also in the student apartment business, proposed a complex of 200 to 300 units, which would have housed up to 1,000 people on land off Rolling Ridge Road behind Hobart Lane in North Amherst. It was primarily for students but included affordable units for families. The size and density of the project concerned many and the plan ran into stiff opposition from residents.

Because of the location and the scope of the project, a comprehensive permit was needed. but this was turned down by the Select Board.

Four years ago, another out-of-state apartment developer floated the idea of an 800-bed project on the west side of Sunset Avenue near Fearing Street, but that project never got beyond informal discussions.

More recently, a proposal to rezone property in North Amherst center for a mix of housing for families and students was turned down by Town Meeting. And the Gateway district, a project to erect mixed-use buildings between the university and downtown, including rental housing, is stalled.

Town leaders must balance competing interests: a commitment to land conservation, respecting established neighborhoods and housing students, all of whom cannot live on campus.

If the planning and review process for The Retreat proceeds, there may be good reasons why it will not succeed. But Amherst must face the fact that the university's strategic plan calls for adding students.

New housing must go somewhere. Build it, because those students will come.

Those who cannot be housed on-campus will continue to test the supply of rental housing in Amherst, exacerbating current problems.

Source URL: <http://www.gazettenet.com/home/4928909-95/housing-amherst-town-project>

Planning Board member:

Van Kaynor
474 Market Hill Rd
Amherst, MA 01002
(413)549-1913 or vankaynor@gmail.com

Connie Kruger
✍

July 1, 2013

RECEIVED JUL 11 2013

Dear Town Manager John Musante,

I write to express concern about the planned "Retreat" in Cushman. I had prepared remarks for Town Meeting, but never spoke as the motion to dismiss the related article passed narrowly.

I would like to point out that the Town and its residents have spent many years coming up with a Master Plan that attempts to balance the needs for development and the need for natural preservation. The resulting maps show this property tagged on more than one map as not appropriate for development. Specifically, the map entitled "Town of Amherst Conceptual Land Use" shows a green star right on this property listing it as "Potential Priority Areas for Conservation", NOT with a blue star for areas prioritized for new development. (There are 11 blue starred places in town).

This map also shows "Natural Absolute Constraints" and "Natural Partial Constraints" which include slopes of >15%, streams, ponds and wetlands. These are shown in purple and pink and are peppered throughout this property. These are areas that are very important to our ecosystem. This past spring I photographed many vernal pools on this property some of which are not apparently documented on this map. Let me know if they are of interest.

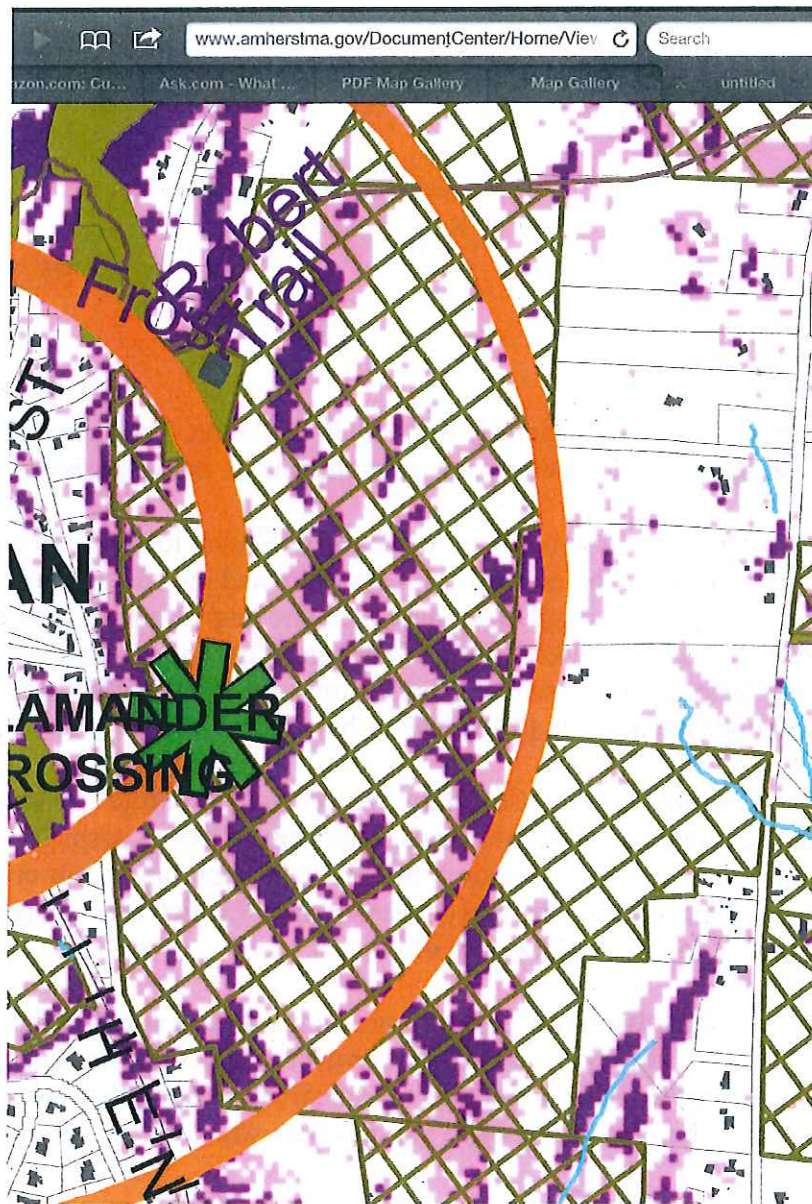
These natural features cannot effectively be preserved with a development of this size. When asked about downsizing this "Retreat" the CEO said that this project was as small as financially feasible for them. It seems very clear to me that this project would effectively destroy this valuable habitat. It does not seem fair or advisable to shun the efforts of so many people who took part in this comprehensive planning effort.

The other point I wanted to make at Town Meeting concerns planning at its worst – the opposite of the community involvement that was encouraged during the Master Plan creation. In the 1980s a deal was made between the land owner and the Town. In exchange for the small amount of land to site the water treatment plant at the base of Market Hill Road, a 25 foot wide road to nowhere was blasted through ledge at considerable tax payer expense. Now, the current "Retreat" development shows an access road using this entrance which makes no sense in this proposal. The preferred plan shows housing on the south side of this 149 acres. The primary destination for the students who would live there would be the University or the downtown area so this northerly entrance/ exit onto Market Hill Road would be little used. If students were required to use this entrance, then the traffic issues presented for Cushman center would be exacerbated.

This is planning at its absolute worst – deals made without community involvement and paid for by the tax payers. Please help defeat this project!

Sincerely, 
Van Kaynor

CC The Select Board
The Planning Board



proposed
Close up of "Retreat" property (full map next pg.)

Note Pink and Purple Partial + Absolute
Natural Constraints

Town of Amherst Conceptual Land Use



- Potential Priority Areas for Conservation
- Potential Priority Areas for Redevelopment or Infill
- Potential Priority Areas for New Development
- 1/4 Mile from village center
- 1/2 Mile from village center
- Existing Protected Open Space
- Existing Partially Protected Land
- Natural Absolute Constraints
- Natural Partial Constraints
- Structures
- Major Trails
- Local & Literary Trails

Land Protection Status is based upon the Town of Amherst Tax Assessment Database as of March 28, 2007.

Existing Protected Open Space includes:
APR Land, Town Conservation Areas, Land with Conservation Restrictions, Land owned by Private Land Trusts, MADCR Lands, Subdivision Open Space & Town Recreation Areas & Schools.

Partially Protected Open Space includes:
Land in the Chapter 61, 61A & 61B program.

Natural Absolute Constraints include:
Slopes of greater than 25%, Hydrography & Land in the FPG Zone.

Natural Partial Constraints include:
Wetlands & Slopes between 15% & 25%.

Horizontal Datum: MA Stateplane Coordinate System, Zone 4151, Datum NAD83, Feet

Planimetric basemap features compiled at 1"=40' and 1"=100' scale from April, 1999 Aerial Photography. Aerial Photography: April, 2004. Parcels compiled through a "best-fit" methodology to match the basemap; revisions are ongoing. Property Lines are not for conveyance purposes.

The Town of Amherst and its mapping contractors assume no legal responsibility for the information contained herein.

